

Message Text

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ACTION SS-20

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OMB-01 ORM-03 SR-02 TRSE-00 SAM-01 PRS-01 DRC-01 /135 W

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R 151431Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1535

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

RUESBE BEIRUT 5384

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0923

FOR SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR; AID FOR FFP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, PINT, JO, IS

SUBJ: PL 480 TITLE II FY 75 PROGRAM IN ISRAELI-
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

REF: JERUSALEM 210

1. I HAVE TODAY SIGNED OUR AIRGRAM FORWARDING RECOMMENDED
PL 480 TITLE II PROGRAMS TO BE CARRIED OUT IN FY 75 BY VOLUN-
TARY AGENCIES IN JORDAN/WEST BANK AND GAZA. WE RECOMMEND
THEREIN AN EXCEPTION TO AID/W FY 75 GUIDELINES, I.E. CONTINUED
FEEDING OF APPROX 32,000 ARAB ADULTS (20,000 IN WEST BANK AND
12,000 IN GAZA STRIP). OUR AIRGRAM FULLY EXPLAINS HUMANITARIAN
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION, POINTING OUT THAT GOI MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL WELFARE IS CURRENTLY PERFORMING TO LIMIT OF ITS RESOURCES
ON BEHALF OF THESE NEEDY INDIVIDUALS AND THAT MEAGRE FINANCIAL
RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SOME RECIPIENTS ARE INCREASINGLY INADE-
QUATE IN FACE OF PHENOMENAL POST-WAR RISE IN MARKET PRICES OF
MOST BASIC FOODSTUFFS. PROPOSED RECIPIENTS, WHO COMPRISE ONLY
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HARD-CORE CASES AS DIFINED BY GOI'S CRITERIA, THUS HAVE NO

REAL ALTERNATIVE TO TITLE II COMMODITIES AS ASSURED SOURCE OF FOOD.

2. IN ADDITION TO THESE VALID HUMANITARIAN REASONS, HOWEVER, I AM ALSO TROUBLED BY POSSIBLE POLITICAL EFFECTS OF LARGE-SCALE REDUCTION IN TITLE II PROGRAM HERE, ESPECIALLY OF CESSATION OF ADULT FEEDING. MY CONCERN IS TWO-FOLD: (1) THE POTENTIAL FOR COMPLICATING THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES; AND (2) THE DANGER OF OUR ACTION BEING MISREAD AS A SIGNAL OF INTENT, ESPECIALLY BY GOI.

3. RE SITUATION ON WEST BANK, JERUSALEM REFTEL UNDERSCORES CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COST AND AVAILABILITY OF BASIC FOODS AND POLITICAL SENTIMENTS AMONG ARAB POPULATION. CONGEN REMAINS IN BETTER POSITION THAN WE TO COMMENT ON RAMIFICATIONS OF TITLE II REDUCTION ON WEST BANK. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER, SUCH ACTION WOULD AT LEAST COMPLICATE SINCERE GOI EFFORT TO DEAL WITH ARAB WELFARE PROBLEMS, AND COULD LEAVE USG OPEN TO CRITICISM OF "NO LONGER CARING" ABOUT WEST BANK ARABS. SITUATION WOULD BE SIMILAR, THOUGH PROBABLY MUCH LESS MARKED, IN GAZA. SUCH CONCLUSION COULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT ON OUR ABILITY TO PLAY LEADERSHIP ROLE IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES WHICH MAY EMERGE.

4. ANOTHER CONCERN IS WHAT ISRAELIS MIGHT READ INTO REDUCTION IN TITLE II PROGRAM IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AT THIS TIME. I AM AFRAID THERE MIGHT BE SOME WHO WOULD TRY TO MISINTERPRET OUR ACTION AS EVIDENCE OF REDUCED INTEREST IN ARAB POPULATIONS UNDER OCCUPATION, AND THUS AS A REDUCTION IN USG CONCERN OVER POLICIES PURSUED BY GOI TOWARD OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. SUCH A MISREADING OF OUR INTENTION COULD BE ESPECIALLY UNFORTUNATE IN THE TIME FRAME OF THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

5. THERE IS LITTLE ENOUGH THAT USG CAN DO AT PRESENT TO PLAY CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES. THE LEAST WE CAN DO IS TO AVOID ACTIONS THAT MIGHT UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATE EITHER GOI POSITION IN TERRITORIES OR OUR POSITION VIS-A-VIS ISRAELIS AND ARABS. I AM AWARE OF THE BUDGETRY AND AVAILABILITY CONSTRAINTS CURRENTLY FACING STATE/AID IN FORMULATING NEXT YEARS TITLE PROGRAM. I NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT ANY FURTHER REDUCTION IN THE PROGRAMS PROPOSED FOR WEST BANK OR GAZA
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FOR FY 75 WOULD BE PARTICULARLY ILL-CONCEIVED. I ACCORDINGLY URGE APPROVAL OF THE PROGRAMS FOR THOSE AREAS AS SUBMITTED.
KEATING

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